2454 Boulder Briefing Memo for Hill Testimony

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GUYANA

Political Scene: A Cooperative Republic since 1970, Guyana has a mixed economy and maintains close ties with Cuba and the Eastern Bloc. At the request of the government of Prime Minister Forbes Burnham, the Parliament has again postponed elections.

U.S. Position: We continue to have normal, friendly relations with the Burnham government. We favor the continuation of the democratic process in Guyana and hope that elections can be held at an early date.

Jonestown Aftermath: There has been little progress in Guyanese investigation of the tragedy.

U.S. Position: We have raised this informally with Guyanese officials who explain that the delay has been due primarily to the crowded Court calendar and recent internal political developments. We will continue to remind the GOG of its promise to complete their inquiry. A Chief Justice is carrying out the investigation.

Judicial Proceedings: Two People's Temple members Richard Beikman and Larry Layton are being tried in Guyana for murder.

U.S. Position: The Guyanese judicial system is proceeding with the trials of the two Americans. We believe the GOG is to actively prosecuting both cases. The Department of Justice is cooperating with the Guyanese in the prosecution of Larry Layton through the transfer of information and assisting in the return of witnesses to Guyana to testify.

The House of Israel: Headed by an American citizen, David Hill aka Rabbi Washington, the House of Israel is accused of participating in political violence on behalf of the Guyanese Government and being linked with the death of a Roman Catholic priest.

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U.S. Position: Hill jumped bail in Ohio in 1960 and was subsequently convicted in absentia for a felony. The State of Ohio does not intend to seek his extradition. As Hill has not committed any federal offense, we are not in a position to request his extradition.

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